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TRADES UNIONS:
AN INQUIRY INTO
THEIR RULES AND WORKING,
BASED ON THE EVIDENCE BEFORE THE ROYAL COMMISSION;
SHOWING
THE FOLLY OF ALL ATTEMPTS TO RAISE WAGES BY
VIOLENCE AND STRIKES,
AND THE BEAUTY AND EXCELLENCE OF THE DIVINE LAWS GOVERNING
WORKMEN AND EMPLOYERS.

BY ROBERT JOBSON.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

TRADES UNIONS.

A Prize Essay.

"The (Divine) law requires us only to take another's place, and to consider what our principles would require us to do under the other's circumstances. If one is a seller, he is to consider what—if he were a buyer—he would consider it right that a seller should do. If he is a master, what—if a servant—he would expect a master to do. By thus placing ourselves in the position of those with whom we have to do, we learn to be more just and merciful—to demand less, and to give more; in a word, to be more equitable. What a different world it would be, if this great law were in any considerable measure the rule of conduct! The law of equity is the practical form of the law of love to the neighbour; practically, to love our neighbour as ourselves is to do to him as we would that he should do to us. This is the law of Heaven."—BRUCE.

In this paper we purpose placing before you a clear view of that important question, CAPITAL and LABOUR, now engaging public attention. In endeavouring to do this, we hope also to show the influence Trades-Unions are exercising on the trade of this country. We shall also take into consideration the character of their rules in relation to fixing the price of labour, piece-work, apprentices, machinery, "chasing," the relationship of master and workman, and many other points, all bearing on this important subject. We shall also consider the subject of picketing, strikes, &c.; their nature and results. And, in doing this, we shall, as a basis for our arguments, seek to be guided by the divine law—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." This law is applicable to employer as well as to workman; both are to be guided by it in their dealings with each other. If we examine all good human laws, we shall find that this simple but divine law forms their essence; and it brings happiness or misery, just as it is observed or disregarded. We cannot too well remember the excellent words we have chosen for our motto, that "the divine law requires us only to take another's place, and to consider what our principles would require us to do under the other's circumstances. If one is a seller, he is to consider what—if he were a buyer—he would consider it right that a seller should do; if he is a master, what—if a servant—he would expect a master to do. By thus placing ourselves in the position of those with whom we have to do, we learn to be more just and merciful—to demand less and give more; in a word, to be more equitable." We are therefore to apply this as the standard by which we ought to measure the conduct of the employer to his workman, and of the workman to his employer. With such for our aim, and entering on the subject in a becoming spirit, we have no doubt that the result of our inquiry will be in every way satisfactory and profitable.

We will now proceed to consider the subject of capital and labour, and the law that regulates the rise and fall of prices. Capital stands to the employer in the same relation that labour does to the workman. If the demand for money is great, the value of it will rise accordingly; but if the demand for it declines, its value will decrease in a like ratio. For instance: in the month of May, 1866, money was in so great demand that the bank-rate rose to ten per cent.; but from the month of July, 1867, the demand has so decreased that the bank-rate has fallen to two per cent., at which rate it has since remained. It is the same not only with money, but with other commodities—such as tea, sugar,

coffee, corn, cotton, coal, or wood ; for these things are only capital in another form. If there is a great demand for tea and sugar, the prices will naturally rise ; and if the supplies are short they will rise the quicker. But if there is little demand for them the prices will naturally fall ; and should the supplies be large they will fall the quicker, until they attain their own natural level. There are, of course, exceptions to this, when prices may advance more than is justified by the actual consumption ; such as, for instance, when corn becomes scarce, speculators will buy up and hold for advanced rates. Or, again, when there is no great want of the article, they will combine, buy up, and hold, thus forcing the prices up to an unnatural level ; for " bulls and bears " are to be found in commerce as well as on the Stock Exchange. In the first case the speculation is legitimate, because the short supply justifies it ; and it serves a useful purpose in conserving a universal article of food by compelling the consumer—from its enhanced price—to partake more sparingly of it, or to seek for a substitute in another article of food until fresh supplies of corn arrive. In the latter case the speculation is not legitimate, because the quantity in the market does not warrant an advance in price, and therefore it partakes more of the character of gambling than of fair legitimate trading. Both these cases, however, are exceptions, and they only prove the general rule, that supply and demand—if left free and unfettered—will regulate themselves.

Now, labour may be regarded in the same way. When work is plentiful, wages, or the price of labour, will rise, and more so if the labourers are few ; but when work is scarce, wages will decline, and still more so if labour is abundant. Let us give you an illustration of this : Before the discovery of gold in California and Australia, wages were moderately low ; but immediately these great gold fields were laid open, the demand for every kind of workmanship gradually rose until the price of labour attained an almost fabulous height. Carpenters, joiners, shipwrights, seamen, masons, bricklayers, and diggers, all were wanted, and in proportion as that demand rose did wages increase ; but when the gold fever gradually died out, wages gradually decreased. This law of supply and demand in its operations is altogether wise and good. Its admirable action is obvious. The low price of an article is an announcement to all concerned that there is more than enough of that article already in the market, and that it should cease to be produced, or be taken elsewhere. The high price of an article is, on the other hand, an intimation that more of the article is wanted, and it invites a supply from wherever the article is possessed. Nothing can be conceived more simple, clear, beneficial and beautiful than the divine law, and nothing more fully proves the truth, that the important subjects of capital and labour have not been left to the guidance of blind chance ; but that they, like all other things in the economy of nature and of man, are under the control of wise and beneficent regulations, the safeguards of a Divine Providence.

Here, then, is a simple law in political economy, which every child may learn, but ignorance of which has led to many unhappy differences between master and workmen, as we will proceed to show. Now, then, what is the principle the trades-unions go upon in selling labour ? It is this : They fix a *minimum* rate of wages for each workman—good, bad, or indifferent. The masters are at liberty to give more if they feel inclined, but the men are not at liberty to accept less, whether they feel inclined or not ; and that minimum rate is oftentimes fixed by the unions in an arbitrary manner, irrespective of the state of trade with the masters, whether it is brisk or slack, or whether labour is scarce or plentiful. On this point we will allow the men to speak for themselves. Mr. W. Allen, Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers,

in giving his evidence to the commissioners appointed to inquire into the organisation and rules of trades-unions, answers thus :—

Question 852. (Commissioner).—I think you said that a great number of the strikes arose from the resistance to a lowering of wages?—Yes.

Q. 853. When provisions rise, I suppose you sometimes ask for a rise of wages?—It has only been, as I have said, within these last twelve months that any material change has taken place, except in the north of England and in Scotland.

Q. 854. But when the masters endeavoured to lower the wages, did they ever state that provisions had fallen?—No.

Q. 855. They never gave that as a reason for wishing to give a less rate of wages?—As a rule, they assigned no reason at all beyond the simple fact that they want to reduce the wages inasmuch as the orders are not coming in so rapidly as they should; that trade is bad, in fact.

Q. 856. Then, the reason they give is slackness of trade?—Yes.

Q. 857. But you have never heard that masters have said that as the wages were raised when provisions rose, they thought they ought to be reduced when provisions fell?—No. I have heard that employers say, “When trade is good we have given you an advance of wages, and when trade is bad you ought to submit to a reduction.”

Q. 858. But that position of the masters has been resisted?—It has been resisted, and is being resisted now at Blackburn. They propose there to reduce the wages two shillings per week, and the men are all on strike in consequence of refusing.

Q. 859. At Blackburn has there ever been a rise of wages in consequence of a briskness of trade?—Yes.

Q. 860. And the men, being pleased with that, have not yielded to the design of the masters to lower the wages when the trade is slack?—Precisely so.

Q. 861. So that you have one rule for yourselves and another for your master?—We keep what we can get, as a general rule.

According to this evidence, whether trade is slack or brisk, it makes no difference to the unions. If the masters attempt to reduce the wages, they strike. Now, can anything be more unfair and foolish than conduct of this kind? And is not this going against that healthy law of political economy—that wages, like capital and merchandise, should be allowed to regulate themselves according to the demand for labour? It is not only a violation of that law, but it is a violation of that higher law, which the Divine Law-maker has planted in the minds and hearts of all men—that law which says, “Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.” The men quietly take an advance of wages from their masters when trade is good; but when trade is bad with them, they show their gratitude by making it still worse, by ceasing to work. The masters have the sense to see that it is better to work for a small profit instead of allowing their hands and works to stand still, but the men answer, “Profit or no profit, we mean to have our full wages; and if you cannot give full wages we won’t have any.”

Again, the same witness thus answers :—

Q. 948. You have said that when an employer proposed to reduce wages, you generally resisted that on the principle that, having got what you desired to get, you would endeavour to retain it?—Certainly.

Q. 949. Do you, on giving advice on these matters, take into account questions of competition between different parts of the United Kingdom, or questions of foreign competition, and how far it is possible for employers to compete with each other, if certain wages are given?—We know nothing, in fact, of the circumstances of the employers’ com-

petition, and, therefore we are not in a position to deal with it; but as a rule I would say, if one employer runs into competition with another, we would decidedly object to allow the employer who has reduced the price of the article to reduce our wages to meet that.

Q. 950. But where the employers give you as a reason for a reduction in the price of the article that the demand is diminished, do you procure any information for your society which would enable you to judge whether such a statement is founded on fact, and whether, with the diminished demand for the article, the masters' wish to lower the wages is unreasonable?—We generally make inquiry, and we have, as a rule, means of ascertaining pretty accurately the condition of things before we give advice.

Here, then, the refusal to lower wages is not only damaging to the masters, but to the men themselves. Labour on the Clyde is cheaper than it is on the Thames; so that the Scotch shipbuilder, by offering to build ships for less, is able to carry off the trade of his English competitors by the English workmen refusing to lower their wages to their natural level; and the result is this:—The English shipbuilder loses the contract, and the workman his wages. And this will apply, not only to shipbuilding, but to every other branch of trade. Now, let us suppose that the principles of trades-unions in this respect were to become general; in short, that England was to become a huge trade-union society, maintaining the price of labour in the face of Scotch or foreign competition—what would be the result? It would be this: that as men buy in the cheapest market, they would, as a matter of course, leave the English goods, and buy the Scotch or continental goods. This artificial restraint on the price of labour cuts two ways. It harms both the master and the workman; and when the former sees that through these trade rules he has lost the contract, he will very naturally turn his capital to some other business where he is not hampered by them, leaving his obstinate workmen to reap the fruit of their folly, the charity of the public, or the tender mercies of the work-house.

There is another important fact bearing on this branch of the subject, which English workmen do not sufficiently recognise. That is the competition between English labour and foreign labour. Owing to the great advances made by science, time and space are gradually becoming lessened—we might almost say, annihilated; and this is most materially affecting our commercial position. Countries that were formerly strangers in more ways than one are drawing closer to each other, and are becoming more firmly knit together in the great brotherhood of nations; and by these civilising agencies, that day is slowly, but surely, approaching when the prayer of the poet shall become a reality—

“And man to man the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.”

Steam, railways, and electricity, are three of the great instruments employed by Divine Providence in bringing about this happy state. Our intercourse with Europe is every day increasing, while our continental neighbours are gradually following our example, becoming more and more “a nation of shopkeepers,” finding that this is better for their health and purse than wasting their life and treasure in useless wars. And one of the results from this is, that British capitalists are taking advantage of the cheapness of foreign labour. Hence we have from Norway, Sweden, and Russia, large quantities of flooring boards, mouldings, doors, and even wooden spouts; and from Belgium, great supplies of manufactured iron, such as rails, steam-engines, &c. From a return of the Board of Trade, we learn that in 1862 the export of ironwork from Belgium was £1100, while in 1865 it had increased to £95,000. From the same source we also learn that £926,396 worth of

cotton goods were imported from the Continent into England in 1866. These, then, are a few of the results of advancing civilisation. They form a picture with two faces. The first, a happy one; the second, an unhappy one. The bright side shows that the influence of commerce, science, and knowledge are advancing, and that by them "the sword shall be turned into the ploughshare and the spear into the pruning-hook," and gentle Heaven-born peace shall one day reign in the place of the demon — War, that has so often desolated Europe. The unhappy side of the picture shows that these large importations of foreign goods are caused to a great extent by strikes and the high price of labour in England; so that the profit and wages on them made by our friend, the foreigner, are lost to the English employer and workman. To the British workman, therefore, we strongly recommend a careful study of this interesting, but unhappy side of the picture.

We now come to consider the question of the minimum rate of wages. Mr. George Howell, a member of the Bricklayers' Operative Society, thus testified before the Commission:—

Q. 1702. You fix a minimum rate of wages?—Yes.

Q. 1703. In the case of a clumsy, slow, and inefficient workman, who cannot do anything like the work of a quick and adroit workman, you do not make him work longer hours, or at a lower rate of wages?—No.

Q. 1704. The maximum is paid to the superior man, not by an additional rate of wages, but by allowing him an hour's work which he does not in fact do?—That is frequently done; but I admit that in many instances more money is paid.

Q. 1705. In point of fact then, there is no encouragement for men of ability and skill to work more?—I very much regret to say that is true.

Q. 1706. You think it prejudicial, not only to the general interests of your particular trade, but to society?—Yes.

Mr. Coulson, member of the Operative Bricklayers' Society, answers:—

Q. 1479. Supposing two bricklayers to be engaged in the same description of work, the one being a very adroit workman, and the other a very slow and feeble man, have they the same rate of wages?—They have both the same rate of wages. Again, Mr. Howell answers:—

Q. 1718. What do you understand by the minimum rate of wages which you fix? Does it not mean merely this, as much as you can get for the trade considered as an average?—Yes.

Q. 1719. Your complaint of the masters, as I understand you, is that, after being compelled by the union to give as much to all men as the trade can get, they will not pay something more for skilled workmen?—Yes.

Q. 1720. Does the minimum rate mean the lowest rate which a skilled workman is paid?—Yes; which we think he should take under any circumstances.

Again, another of the men, Mr. R. Harnott, answers:—

Q. 1225. Supposing that an employer says, I should be glad to take John on at 5s. a day, which is rather above the contract, he being a very good workman, and I should be glad to take Thomas on, but not give him more than 4s., which is rather below the contract, he being a bad workman. Can he do that, supposing both of them to be union men?—So far as the society is concerned, it does not interfere with a superior man receiving what he can get, nor does it interfere with an inferior man who is not up to the average.

Q. 1226. But would they leave the employer to decide that, or would the lodge decide it for him?—The lodge, by the evidence of the men working in the same shop.

On this principle, therefore, a good workman is paid no more for his work than an inferior one. Of course the unions say the masters ought

to pay him more than the minimum rate, but the masters answer very justly, "You by your rule fixing a high minimum rate compel us to give an inferior workman more than he is really worth, therefore we are not able to give more to the superior workman. If you wish it, we will pay them according to their respective merits, by adding to the wages of the good workman what we deduct from the wages of the inferior one."

To see the injustice of the minimum rate, let us suppose for argument's sake, that a carpenter or mason, after he had finished his week's work and received his pay, went into a tailor's shop and said, "I want, sir, to buy two coats." The tailor immediately produces two, one of superior cloth and make, the other of inferior cloth and make. "There, my good fellow, there are two coats price three pounds each." The workman examines them and immediately fixes on the good one. "I'll take this one and leave the other," says he. "Oh no, you won't," says the tailor; "if you take the one you must take the other." "What!" says the workman, "do you charge the same price for an inferior coat that you charge for a superior one?" "Yes," answers the tailor; "and why shouldn't I? You sell your labour on the minimum scale, and I sell my coats in the same way; so the bad must go with the good." Now, the workman very naturally and very reasonably objects to pay the same price for an inferior article as he pays for a good one; and for precisely similar reasons the employer is justified in refusing to give the same price for inferior workmanship that he gives for superior. You pay more for a good lawyer than you do for a less able one; more for an experienced physician than for a less experienced; more for a highly talented than for a less talented artist; and so on through other professions; and this is as it ought to be. But the practical working of trades-unions is to deny this, from their overlooking the important fact that men are variously gifted. You will remember the beautiful parable where our Lord likened the kingdom of heaven unto a man travelling into a far country, who called his servants and delivered to them his goods. Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; he gave to every man according to his several abilities. The master then departed, and the servants went and traded with their talents. On his return he required from them an account of his money. The one that had received five talents came and brought other five talents; he that had received the two talents made two more; while the third, instead of usefully employing the one talent, went and hid it in the earth. And the same lesson is conveyed in the parable of the nobleman, where the servant that had gained ten talents was made ruler over ten cities, and he that gained the five talents was made ruler over five cities. We learn, then, from this, that men are of different capacities, and according to that capacity do they receive, and according to their work are they rewarded. Now, trades-unions ignore all this. They try to make it out that there is little or no difference between the talents of their artisans; that each must do a certain amount of work and no more; and that all are to be paid alike. You will, therefore, see at a glance the difference between the Divine system and their system. The first is natural, perfectly suited to man's capacities; and for the free and full development of his powers, and that in proportion as he labours in that proportion is he paid. On the other hand, the system of the trades-unions is unnatural and artificial. It does not properly develop the faculties, but tends rather to cramp them by placing restraints on a workman as to what speed he shall work at. It says that the labourer must not do a bricklayer's work, or a bricklayer a mason's work, even although they are quite able to do it, and which, logically carried out, means that a labourer, a bricklayer, and a mason must continue a labourer, a bricklayer, and a mason to the end of his

days; that piecework and apprentice work are to be limited, although the master is quite willing to take more of them; and, lastly, that each class of workman is to be paid alike. Now, all this is the merest folly and absurdity; and if you turn for a moment to Nature, you will find that the Creator there, too, protests against it, and corroborates in His works the teaching of His Divine Word. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon;" and as "one star differeth from another star in glory," so one mind differeth from another mind in power, and one hand differeth from another in strength and skill; and Nature and Reason, as well as Scripture, repudiate the very idea of all these being measured by the same fixed standard, or rewarded on the same fixed scale. The talents of the artisan, like the talents in any other business, ought to be paid according to their real worth and intrinsic value. They ought to stand solely on their own merits, and not be dragged down by the skill of a second, third, or fourth-rate character. And when they are not so considered, a serious injury is done to their owner by taking from him that incentive which is ever urging him on to rise higher and higher in his profession. He says to himself, "What is the use of all my efforts to improve? I have no encouragement; for I am paid no more for my work than my mate here, who seldom or never makes any exertion, and who has little or no energy and activity in him." It is not the master's fault the good workman is not paid more. It is the fault of the union in fixing a minimum rate; and until that mode of payment is abolished, the really good and deserving workman will be underpaid. Besides, the minimum rate is unfair to the inferior workman as well. When, for instance, trade is brisk, the employer takes on say 500 men; but when trade becomes slack he requires to pay a certain number of them off, and who amongst them does he discharge? Why, of course, the inferior workmen, and he keeps on the good ones.

Mr. Geo. Smith, of the firm of Smith and Taylor, contractors for the Foreign Office, thus speaks in relation to this point, in his answer to Question 2823:—"I think that the greatest mischief, however, arises from the fixed minimum. It throws a vast number of men out of work who would be receiving fair wages, because in every establishment there are men, whom I will not call inferior, but who are physically incapable of earning as much as others; for instance, a man may be so from age. The consequence of our being obliged to pay almost a uniform rate of wages is that the moment there is a reduction, the shops or the works are gone through, and all these poor men are picked out and discharged. I mean those who are receiving a greater rate of wages than they are fairly entitled to."

Q. 2851. I think you stated that the effect of a uniform rate of wages was injurious to the skilled workman by taking from him his zeal in the execution of his work, inasmuch as he got insufficient remuneration for it?—Yes. I do not think there is that incentive which he would otherwise have; and it is also a very great hardship upon the less skilled, those who may happen to have met with an accident, or who are not so active as they were, because they are as it were a sort of outcasts, who go from shop to shop, and ultimately come to a workhouse. I believe that all these attempts to carry out an artificial system are injurious alike to men and masters.

Q. 2854. So that there is first an injurious operation upon the superior workmen, because they are prevented from earning according to their worth; and at the same time there is an injurious operation upon inferior workmen, because in times when work is scarce they must be the first discharged?—That is my view of it. It is far better that all should be employed, than that a certain number should be wandering about subsisting on alms.

There is something delusively attractive in the idea of a minimum price of labour being fixed, inasmuch as it may be said, with some show of reason, if you employ a man at all you must pay him not less than such or such an amount necessary to his comfortable subsistence. But the fallacy of such an idea appears at once, when we reflect that the natural—that is, the Divine—law will give a man what the state of trade will allow, and anything more than that would cause the trade to stop by hastening the ruin of the employer, and therefore the stoppage altogether of the wages of the workman. Low wages warn the operative away from the particular branch of labour in question, which in time will produce a rise, because the demand will continue and the supply decrease; but an artificial elevation of the scale of wages invites more labour even when the trade is fully stocked, and hence tends to perpetuate and increase the downward tendency. We can thus see in their operations the essential difference between the Divine law and the artificial Union-made law. The first, like all God's laws, is not only a law of wisdom, but a law of mercy, for it acts like a beacon to warn the workman away from danger; the second, like a false light, luring and tempting him into danger.

Look at this question how you will, and from any point you choose turn it inside out, and examine it with microscopic closeness and keenness, and you will come to the same conclusion. The idea of fixing a minimum rate was conceived, in order to get by fair or unfair means as much as possible out of the employers; but like everything begotten of selfishness, it has outwitted itself. The mind's eye of the individual who originated the idea must have been afflicted with a squint: he could not have seen straight; and in attempting to cheat others, he has cheated himself. By the inexorable law of the trades-union, the poor workman is bound to take according to the minimum principle. He has no alternative. All are to be paid alike, good, bad, and indifferent. Classical tradition tells us there lived once upon a time a famous robber, named Procrustes; and this robber had a bed on which it was his cruel practice to lay all his unfortunate captives. If they were too short for the bed, he strained and racked their limbs until they attained the required length; and if they were too long for the bed, he cut and maimed and mangled them until they exactly fitted in. The trades-unions of England are like unto this robber; for in them they have the bed of the minimum wage, and on which it is their cruel practice to lay all their unfortunate members, and by which they are measured and mangled by this modern Procrustes.

The endeavour on the part of the unions to fix the price of labour according to an arbitrary rule is very similar in character to that made in olden times, when the justices of the various counties fixed the labourers' and workmen's wages. On this subject we have some very curious and interesting information. About the beginning of the year 1685, the justices of Warwickshire, in the exercise of a power intrusted to them by an Act of Elizabeth, fixed at their quarter sessions a scale of wages for the county, and notified that every employer who gave more than the authorised sum, and every working man who received more, should be liable to punishment. The wages of the common agricultural labourer, from March to September, were fixed at the precise sum mentioned by Petty—namely, 4s. a week without food. From September to March the wages were to be only 3s. 6d. a week.

Again, "The magistrates of Suffolk met there in the spring of 1682 to fix a rate of wages, and resolved, that where the labourer was not boarded, he should have 5s. a week in winter, and 6s. in summer."

Again, "In 1601 the justices at Chelmsford fixed the wages of the Essex labourer, who was not boarded, at 6s. in winter, and 7s. in summer."

The wages when so fixed were announced by proclamation at the market-places, and were to continue until the justices thought proper to alter them.

About the year 1610, a bailiff of husbandry received 52s. a year, or 1s. a week; an agricultural man-servant of the best sort, 50s.; a common servant, 40s.; a middling servant, 29s.; a boy under 16, 20s., and so on. A mower received 5d. per day with his meat; a man reaper, haymaker, hedger or ditcher, 4d; a woman reaper, 3d.; a woman haymaker, 2d. If no meat was given, these sums were to be exactly doubled, except that the woman haymaker was to receive 5d. instead of 4d. A master carpenter's wages was 8d. per day with meat, or 1s 2d. without; a chief joiner or master sawyer 6d. with meat, or 1s. without; bricklayer 5d. with, or 9d. without, meat; and tailors 4d. with, or 8d. without.* These were the rates of wages at that period as gathered from an account printed in the *Archæologian*, and fixed by the magistrates for the county of Rutland, and which continued from then nearly down to the breaking out of the Civil War. One can scarcely conceive how the poor labourers and workmen existed on such miserable allowances; and their condition was intensely aggravated by an Act of Parliament passed in the reign of Elizabeth, in which it was declared that "The givers of greater wages than what were allowed by the justices were liable to ten days', and the takers to twenty-one days' imprisonment."

Now, this savage and inhuman system has long since been abandoned. Justices of the present day would never think of fixing the price of the workman's labour, and still less would they think of putting the man in prison because of his taking a shilling or two more; but the trades'-unions wish to do something similar. The wages are by them to be fixed by an arbitrary and artificial law; and when so fixed, the men may take more, but they must not take less. English employers have long ago seen and acknowledged the folly of such a proceeding; and surely English workmen will never be so foolish and insane as to adopt laws and rules which experience has proved to be utterly worthless.

Before leaving this part of the subject, we would like to compare the price of labour of this day with that in times past. It is very usual to hear it said that all classes of the community are, and have been advancing, except the labouring portion. The middle and higher classes, we are told, are increasing in wealth, but the poor working man still remains at starvation's door. There never was a greater fallacy foisted on the public than this; and the slightest reference to history proves the contrary. Compare, for instance, the rates of wages as quoted above with those at present received, and, making allowance for the depreciation in the value of money, it will be seen that the wages of the working classes have vastly improved. And this improvement has not been owing to strikes, but to the gradually increasing wealth and prosperity of the country, the results of Free Trade and wise legislation. "I appeal to every man," says Mr. Bright, speaking on the abolition of the Corn Laws, "who knows the condition of the country, if it is not the fact that in a majority of cases the rate of wages has been advanced from 20 up to 50 per cent. There is not an agricultural labourer—and he is the poorest paid labourer in the country—whose wages have not been increased, whose comforts have not been made more secure, by the abolition of the Law which was supposed to give ample protection to that interest."† Unfortunately, while their wages have been increasing, their education, moral and intellectual, has not been equally attended to, and hence we have much discontent. Some among them have taken advantage of this state of things, in order to sow the seeds of discord

* "Pictorial History of England," vol. iii., p. 659. Also "Eden on the State of the Poor," pp. 125—127.

† Speech of Mr. Bright at Birmingham, October, 1868.

between the men and their employers. These parties are devising all sorts of plans and schemes for the benefit of the working man, except the right kind, and diverting his attention from the quarter where improvement ought to begin. Richard Cobden, one of the best and truest friends the working man ever had, says on this subject, "I wish to see the great mass of the working classes of this country elevate themselves by increased temperance, frugality and economy. I tell you candidly that no people were ever yet elevated except through their own advancing wealth, morality, and intelligence; and any one who tells the workingmen of this country that they may be raised in the social scale by any other process than that of reformation in themselves, is interested either in flattering or deceiving them. If you trace the rise and progress of the middle classes in this country, you will see that in proportion as they became intelligent, as they accumulated wealth, and as they improved in morality, did they rise in political and social importance." Mr. Cobden wished to see temperance, frugality, and economy practised amongst the working men, while Mr. Allen, of the Amalgamated Engineers, shows how highly he appreciates these virtues by spending £40,000 of the money of the Society of Engineers the first six months of the lock-out of 1852; and, from his own confession, the men were even worse at the end of this strike than they were at the beginning.*

Beware, then, Working Men, of your advisers. It is not by warring with your employers, and casting your hard-earned savings into the bottomless pit of strikes, that you can improve your position. Your little will be made to go further by "temperance, frugality, and economy;" and the comforts of your homes will be sweetened by contentment. Remember the advice of your true friend, Richard Cobden—advice which he embodied in his own pure and unselfish life—and whose "unadorned eloquence" pleaded your cause and cheapened your bread, that it is by the practice of honesty, industry and intelligence in all your daily duties, that you can better your condition; thus rendering your services indispensable to your employers, who, sooner than part with faithful servants, will rather part with higher wages for you to remain. It is in this way, Working Men, you can truly raise yourselves in the scale of social life.

We come now to another evil connected with this branch of the subject, and that is the unions not allowing a man to accept less wages if he is willing to do so, and forcing him to support the union. The union acts the part of the tyrant to the employer in not allowing him to give less, and it performs a similar duty to the workman by not allowing him to take less. Mr. Trollope thus answers

Q. 2912. I think you said that there was a disinclination on the part of the unions to allow inferior workmen to take less than a certain rate of wages?—They cannot do it; they would be worried out of their lives.

Q. 2913. If men were to come to you and say, "We are willing to work for 4s. 6d. a day," while the standard rate was 5s., they would not be allowed to do it?—At the present time we should not entertain such a proposition; in fact we shouldn't be able to do it. I have known a case in our shop where an old joiner has been at work, and we have been paying him less wages, and he has said, "I am sorry, sir, I cannot stop, but the men worry me out of my life. I know I am not worth what they are; but I am not allowed to take less wages."

Q. 2914. And if he persevered in working with you without the consent of these men, they would probably strike?—Probably they would strike, but they would first of all try to worry him out.

Q. 2915. And in the event of their failing to do so, they would strike?—Yes.

* See evidence before Royal Commission.

Q. 2916. Do you know anything about picketing?—In 1859 our works were picketed morning, noon, and night. Several of the men who came up from the country said, “I am sorry I cannot stop; but when I go out the men follow me, my wife is annoyed, and my children get hooted at in the street; and therefore I really cannot stop.”

Q. 2917. So that, in short, although there is no actual physical violence towards the man, there is that sort of social violence which prevents him following his employment?—Quite so.

This is the evidence of the masters, and it is corroborated by the men themselves—in fact, their rules sanction it. The Manchester Operative House Painters’ Alliance have a rule in the following words:—“That any person when asked to join the association, being obstinate, and causing delegates, deputations, or any other expenses to be incurred by their obstinacy, shall pay all such expenses, together with the amount of the entrance or re-entrance fee, as the case may be.”

Rule 23 of the Bradford Plasterers’ Union says:—“That no plasterer be allowed to work in any shop more than six days without giving satisfaction to the shop steward that he is a member, or will join the society.” And we will here give you an instance, showing to what a pitch of audacity these plasterers had risen in enforcing these tyrannical rules. A Mr. Howroyd, of Bradford, had four sons working with him. They did not belong to the union. The union men thought they ought to subscribe to its funds, and for this purpose they sent the following letter to the father, dated 7th January, 1867:—

“MR. C. HOWROYD,—We, the operative plasterers of Bradford, do hereby give you notice that all your sons that are working as plasterers which are above twenty one years of age, are requested to join the society on or before Saturday next; and failing to do so, all our men will cease work on Monday morning next, and not return again unless you pay all the expenses of the strike.—We remain, yours,
“THE OPERATIVE PLASTERERS OF BRADFORD.”

Mr. Howroyd’s sons did not wish and would not join the union, and their father would not force them to do so; therefore the men struck work. In relation to Mr. Howroyd’s case, we may also notice that one of the reasons given why the men struck was that he did not obey Rule 27 of the Bradford plasterers, which is in these words:—

“That no member of this society be allowed to work for any firm consisting of more than two masters, unless every partner’s name is publicly stated in full.”

Imagine the clerks or the warehousemen of the City, or Messrs. Barclay, Perkins, and Co.’s draymen going to their employers and addressing them thus:—“Gentlemen,—Unless you put up on your signboard in front of your premises the names of each of your partners, we shall be compelled to strike work.” Here is another case which occurred on the 1st March, 1867:—

“MR. FOSTER,—Sir,—You have three men in your employ that do not belong to any society. I am requested to inform you, that if they do not become members of a society on or before the 11th of March next, your shop will be called a black shop, and no society man will have to work in it.—I remain, yours respectfully,

“J. HAYES, Secretary

“Blackpool Operative House Painters’ Association.”

At Bath a similar case occurred to Mr. Joseph Bladwell. A workman went to him, and said, ‘You have got a non-society man in your employ; if you don’t discharge that man, I will call off all the rest of your men, and none of them shall work for you.’ This time the union reckoned without its host. Its emissary was taken before the magistrate on the charge of interfering with the master’s business, and he received a month’s imprisonment. Now we could fill whole sheets with cases of this kind, and not confined to one particular trade or locality, but to almost all the trades, and from every part of the country, from Man-

chester, Liverpool, Bolton, Derby, Yorkshire, Scotland, and even America. In some cases the men's tools have been stolen, the masters' property destroyed, and even murder itself, as in Sheffield and Manchester, has been committed. We hope, and we are quite willing to believe, that the Sheffield and Manchester outrages are exceptional, and that they ought to stand apart and be judged by themselves; but at the same time we cannot hide from ourselves the fact openly staring us in the face, that where trades-unions have been planted and allowed freely to grow, they have invariably developed the same lawless spirit, manifested the same disregard for the rights of others, and produced the same evil fruit. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles;" and as we are commanded to judge the tree by its fruit, we are driven to the conclusion, that not only the tree, but the very seeds of trades-unionism are evil. Here then are cases where a man is willing to take less than the minimum price, but the union steps in, and says he must not. Is this freedom? Is this the liberty of which English working men are so fond of priding themselves, and about which they so continually talk and preach? True liberty allows everyone to think and act for himself, without any compulsion of this kind. But this is the modern Procrustes over again. Not content with plundering the workman of his wages by his absurd rules and strikes, he is now robbing both him and his employer of their liberty. This spirit of intimidation is utterly foreign to every principle of right and justice, and ought to be held in abhorrence by every honest man. We have no right to interfere between a master and his workman by saying to the one, "You must pay so much," and to the other, "You must accept so much." That is a matter entirely between a workman and his employer, just as his religion is a matter between him and his Maker; and trades-unions are no more justified in interfering in the one case than a body of religious inquisitors would be justified in interfering in the other. Happily for us we are not left to the unions for light on this subject. We read—"Then came the Publicans and said unto Him, Master, what shall we do? and the Master replied, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of Him, saying, And what shall we do? And He said unto them, Do violence to no man; neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." * These words were uttered 1800 years ago; and yet so fresh and appropriate are they for us at this very moment, that they read as if only spoken yesterday. To all honest working men then we say—Abandon those false friends and teachers who are wasting your substance and destroying your character, and follow the advice of Him whose wisdom never fails.

Let us now consider another important part of this subject—namely, the rule by which no bricklayer shall be allowed to do the work of a mason, and no labourer the work of a bricklayer, although quite competent for it. We give the evidence of the men first:—

Q. 2245. Suppose that I, as a master, were to put on certain work three or four labourers whom I consider fit to lay bricks, would your members say that, in their opinion, these men were not fit to be bricklayers? Certainly; the bricklayers would know whether they were fit to be bricklayers.

Q. 2246. But, even though these men had satisfied the master, your members would still persevere in their objection to work with them? If labourers were put to bricklayers' work, they would refuse to work with them.

Q. 2247. That is to say, they would not allow the employer to judge of their capacity? They do not interfere with the master.

Q. 2248. Except by striking?—Yes.

Q. 1285. You do not allow a bricklayer to lay a stone at all—do you?—No.

Q. 1286. Even although he can do it?—I do not know about his being able to do it.

Q. 1287. But, supposing a bricklayer can lay a stone, would you prevent his laying it?—Yes; if he professed to be a bricklayer.

Q. 1288. So that if a bricklayer were to lay stonework, and there were other work to be done on that particular job by stonemasons, they would make him undo that work before they would go to their work; and that would be consistent with your regulations, would it not?—Yes; but on the other hand, I may remark, that our men do not interfere with brickwork.

The following letter was addressed to Messrs. Worthington and Chaloner, master house painters, Blackpool:—"Blackpool, April 18, 1867. Sirs,—It having been brought before the meeting on Monday night that your book-keeper has been doing some writing and painting, you are requested not to let him, he not being a painter. By doing so, you will oblige, yours respectfully, The Committee Blackpool Operative House Painters."

Here is another case, from Sheffield:—"Sept. 12, 1864. To Mr. Reynolds. Dear sir,—I am authorised by our Lodge to state that all our members are willing to turn out at the request of this Lodge, on account of your employing persons to interfere with the work of the bricklayers, contrary to our rules," and so on.

Here is another case from Ashton-under-Lyne:—"Mr. Geo. Colbeck, a joiner and builder, sent in December, 1865, a joiner, bricklayer, and two labourers, to make some alterations in a house; a door was to be removed half the width of itself. The bricklayers built up the part requiring it; the joiner, having to stand idly by while this was doing, proceeded to pull out the few bricks which had to be removed. The bricklayer struck work and left the job. For Mr. Colbeck having infringed the rules by allowing a joiner to pull out bricks which must be done by a bricklayer, he was fined £2, which he paid." Now, we could quote whole pages of instances of this kind from the evidence before the commission; some of them, from their arbitrary cruelty, raising one's honest indignation; others, from their utter absurdity, his merriment and laughter. Here is one from Nottingham. Mr. Murdy, a master plasterer, writes:—"Two years ago, a respectable man, who had formerly been in business as a bricklayer and plasterer, but who had been reduced by circumstances to obtain his livelihood as a journeyman, came to me for employment. Feeling sorry for the man, and knowing him in better days, I gave him employment. After he had been at work a few days, the trade-unionists, in my employ, informed me that I must discharge the man, as they had passed a resolution 'That as he professed to be as much a bricklayer as a plasterer, he should not be allowed to work as a plasterer, and he might go somewhere else and work as a bricklayer.' I remonstrated with them, but to no purpose. The poor man tried all he knew to retain his place of employment with me. He offered to join their trades-union, and become one of their body, if they would allow him to work for his living. He pleaded to them that he had a wife and a large family dependent upon him for bread. But it was no use; they were determined that he should throw himself out of employment, otherwise the whole body of men would strike against him. The result was, I had to come to the understanding that he should leave my employment." "Mr. William Wildsmith, of Manchester, in Nov. 1866, had a dispute with some of his bricklayers, two of whom waited on him and read to him the laws of their Society, and concluded by coolly asking him for their day's wages, amounting to 7s. each, and 3s. each for first-class

railway fare from Manchester, for coming to give him what they called their orders, which he had to pay." A master brickmaker, for having worked in his own brickground, had the following notice sent to him by his workmen, the Lancashire and Cheshire Operative Brick-makers:—"And you must, if you take an active part in your brickground, contribute to this Society, and you are not to employ any non-society men in casting clay." (*Q.* 3428.)

The unions have similar objections to work done by machinery. In Question 3209, an instance is given of an employer having the walls of his building, and many thousands of bricks, destroyed by gas-tar, because the bricks were made by the machine. A reward of £20 was offered, but without effect. In Question 3217, we have another instance. Mr. Israel Brooks, a master mason of Ashton-under-Lyne, received a quantity of sawn base from Kerridge, near Macclesfield. "My men refused to fix it, being polished, as it was against the rules, and struck work accordingly. After standing out against what I considered this injustice three weeks, I was forced to submit to have the polished part defaced, so that they might polish it again by hand; and the men declared after all this expense, it was not so good as when it came from the quarry."

Another instance of a similar kind is given in Question 3362, where carved granite was brought to the men, but this time instead of defacing it, the workmen stood over the stone and did nothing, and for doing nothing, the master was compelled to pay as if all the work had been carved by them, although they had not the skill to do it. Now all this is the very essence of human folly and nonsense; indeed when reading it, one can scarcely believe that men could be guilty of such stupidity. Fact is sometimes stranger than fiction; and if these facts had not been proved from undoubted evidence, they would have defied belief. Well might Mr. Gladstone say that such things were worthy a nation of savages. The practical working of trades-unions, as thus manifested by their own naked monstrosity, is their own condemnation. Comment is unnecessary; but we would call our readers' attention to this, that all these terrible things do not spring from nothing; on the contrary, they are the results of hidden but actual causes. If you plant a certain seed, that seed will produce a certain tree, and that tree, certain fruit; and in the same way if you insemiate certain principles into the minds of men, these principles will produce certain theories, and these theories, when practised, certain results. These, then, are the results produced by trades-union principles; and if these principles become dominant, the same frightful evils will spread all over the country. We will not, however, indulge in prophecy; the picture is already bad enough without investing it with the horrors of the imagination; but we will proceed to a fuller dissection of the union system.

From this evidence there exist three evils in connection with the system. The first is; the unions seek to establish monopoly of labour;*

* This monopoly is carried out in the brick-making trade in Manchester in the most systematic, and, at the same time, the most unjust and tyrannical manner. A ban is placed on machine-made bricks, and the neighbourhood is mapped out into districts—Ashton, Stockport, and Manchester—so that brick-makers, or builders, or carters, are not allowed to contract for or convey bricks out of one district into another; and to carry out this villanous system, a staff of inspectors, or, in other words, custom-house officers, are employed and paid by the Union. It is the duty of these inspectors to watch all brick-carts, so as to prevent Stockport bricks being conveyed to the Manchester district, and Manchester bricks to the Stockport district. One of these inspectors, we are informed, had not the honesty said to be proverbial among thieves; for he was not above receiving

the second, dictation and tyranny to the masters ; and the third, injury to the men themselves. With regard to the first, the unions wish to keep out strangers, in the shape of non-union men, machinery, apprentices, and also by not allowing their fellow workmen to rise in the several grades of their business. By this means they wish to confine the trade to themselves ; for, they reason, the more work there is and the fewer hands there are to do it, the higher will be the wages and the more certain the employment. Here again you can easily detect that serpent of selfishness in trade and commerce, whose head was bruised when the corn laws were abolished. If trades-unions are necessary for workmen to keep up the price of labour, why not have them for grocers, bakers, and butchers ? These parties are as much entitled to protection in their business, as the members of trades-unions ; but if they were to combine to raise the price of provisions, the very first that would cry out against it would be those very men who are now seeking to establish protection for labour. The answer to this question was given when the corn laws were abolished ; and a monopoly in labour can now no more be tolerated in this country than a monopoly in food. It is quite true, as the defenders of trades-unions observe, that there are other professions, such as barristers and brokers, where similar restraints and restrictions exist. The answer to this is short and conclusive. One evil does not justify the existence of another ; it only proves that both should be removed. While, therefore, we disallow the workman the right of monopoly, we grant him the liberty of getting the very highest price he possibly can for his labour, so long as the means he employs for that end are fair and legitimate. And here let us examine for a moment the principles which guide the unions in obtaining higher prices. In a lecture on Capital and Labour delivered in their defence, Mr. Ernest Jones asks, " Is it wrong for the manufacturer to withhold his goods from the market in view of better prices ? If not, neither is it wrong for the workman to withhold his work in view of better wages. Is it wrong for corn merchants, or coal merchants, or iron merchants, or cotton merchants to *arrange together* not to sell their wares under a certain price ? If not, neither is it wrong for labourers, or miners, or spinners, or weavers, to *arrange together* to sell their labour under a certain wage." In answer to this, the workman, like the manufacturer, is at perfect liberty to withhold his labour, in the hope of getting a better price ; but neither workman nor manufacturer is justified in resorting to *combination* to obtain that price. The two cases in these questions are quite distinct. The first is fair and legitimate ; but when, as in the second, we resort to combination, or as Mr. Jones mildly terms it, " *arranging together*," which in plain English means commercial conspiracy, then we overstep the bounds of legitimate trading, and we destroy that honesty of dealing which ought to exist between buyer and seller. Let us suppose, for instance, that the corn merchants were to unite as one man to raise the price of corn beyond its natural level : their customers, the public, would denounce such con-

a. d pocketing a bribe from the carters, or, as one of the Commissioners happily characterised it, " he cheated his employers into doing right." From the evidence placed before the Commission as to these districts, the most frightful atrocities are revealed. Needles have been placed amongst the clay, large quantities of bricks have been destroyed, bottles of gunpowder have been thrown into the houses of obnoxious and non-union employers, while they in self-defence have been compelled to watch, armed, at night to protect their houses and property ; and on one of these occasions two policemen were attacked by a number of ruffians, and one of them brutally murdered. All these terrible doings are clearly traceable as trade outrages, being testified to by several witnesses.

duct as being nothing else than extortion. The combinations of trade-unions is often compared to that of railway companies and joint-stock companies. Well, let us see how far the comparison holds good. It is quite right that a number of individuals should combine to raise the necessary capital to construct a railway; but after it is completed it would be very unjust of that company to combine with other railway companies on the same route, and then coolly to inform the public, "You are hereby informed that we have combined with our friends over the way, and raised our fares from 1d. to 6d. a mile." The combination of the individuals to form the company and raise the necessary capital, is a means for a great good; but the combination of the separate railways for the purpose of raising the fares is a means for great evil and wrong.

Again, let us suppose the joint-stock banks were in some way or other to unite to raise the price of money from its present natural rate of 2 per cent., and then to tell their customers, the public, "We, the Joint-Stock Banks, have all combined, and if you want any more money you must now pay 10 per cent." The thing is manifestly unjust. There is then no harm in a number of individuals combining to form a company, and carry on business in a fair, honourable, and legitimate manner; but there is a vast amount of mischief done when these companies unite as one body to raise their fares, or the price of their money or goods. The combination to form the single company is necessary and lawful; but the combination to unite all the separate companies is a totally different thing—a gigantic monopoly, and therefore most undesirable.

Now, it is exactly so with unions or companies formed for the selling of labour. If the unions simply sought the privilege to form so many separate companies, each of these acting independently of each other; each being at liberty to take a low price without being called in question by the others; each competing with the other, as in other trades, to keep down the price of labour instead of raising it, there would not be the slightest objection to them, but the unions want more than this. Their object is to form different societies, but all to act as members of one common body. Hence the carpenters of London have at times singled out one large building firm and demanded from it an advance of wages. If it is refused, they strike, then picket, and are supported while out of work by the different unions throughout the kingdom. The building firm has thus to struggle not only against its own men, but it has pitted against it the full power of this gigantic combination. Herein lies the sting of unionism; and the closer one examines it the less one likes it. By a combination thus formed, and having ramifications and branches throughout the country, we fully believe that there is no single building firm or railway contractor, however powerful, but could be overpowered by a combination of this kind; and for that reason, therefore, we say of it, as we said of the railway and bank combinations, it is a gigantic monopoly, and therefore most undesirable. Let our law makers then pause before they legalise a combination of this nature; for if such is sanctioned it will beget another great evil, viz.—the combination of employers to resist that of the men. The conclusion we arrive at then is:—workmen are not justified in combining to raise wages; and employers are not justified in combining to lower them. No doubt this "rigging" the market, as it is called, is to some extent practised in commerce and on the Stock Exchange, and there is no written law to prevent it; but gambling in these quarters does not justify gambling amongst workmen and their employers. The natural course is the right one; to allow the prices to rise and fall just as they are influenced by the supply and demand.

Mr. Jones goes on to say:—"The manufacturer, while his mer-

chandise is lying idle waiting for a better price, lives on his accumulated money capital. That capital is at his bankers. The trades-union is the bank of the working-man, and enables him to hoard his idle labour even as the capitalist hoards his idle goods." The truth of this we must all admit. There is nothing whatever to be said against the workman hoarding his little savings; on the contrary, it is highly commendable; and if he cannot find a purchaser for his labour at his price, then he is quite entitled to live on his savings until he does. Every workman is entitled to the privilege of going to this extent; but here his privilege ends. He ought not then to resort to combination, to picketing a master's premises, or intimidating by threats or violence others who are willing to serve that master at lower wages. This is at variance with all law, human and divine. When the offer of his labour is declined, then the next thing for him to do is to try other buyers; if accepted at his price, well and good; if declined, then he may shrewdly guess he is asking too much, and that it is better to accept what the market can fairly give, and live in the hope of things improving. And this is what the merchant does. He offers his tea or cotton, or whatever the goods may be, at a certain price. If the price is above what the buyer is willing to give, the goods are declined. After that, what does he do? Does he follow the advice of Mr. Applegarth,* and picket the buyer's offices? Certainly not. He then either determines to hold the goods or consider the advisability of taking the price offered; and, perhaps, while so considering, a second seller will step in and, by fair competition, cut him out of the sale by selling goods of the same, or similar, quality at the required price. Yet all three parties are as good friends after the transaction as they were before it. And this is done not only once, but thousands of times every day amongst the mercantile classes. Why, then, cannot the buyers and sellers of labour act in the same free, friendly, and charitable spirit?

Although, therefore, we contend most strongly for freedom of trade to the employer, we do not, therefore, advocate employers paying their workpeople badly. We think the fact cannot be denied that there are amongst employers many selfish men who have no sympathy with their workmen, and whose duty goes no further than the letter of the civil law dictates, forgetting that there is, above and beyond this, the moral law, or law of the conscience. Such employers grind down their workpeople to the lowest possible wages, in some cases scarcely enough to keep soul and body together. They amass large fortunes in their lifetime; and when they die, finding they cannot take their wealth with them, they pay, as it were, to enter heaven by bequeathing their money for the erection of churches, chapels, and hospitals, thus giving to man proofs of their piety and charity, but which in the sight of "Him who looketh on the heart" are only enduring monuments of their hypocrisy and meanness. In our opinion it would have been

* Not content with refusing the wages, the Union, like the dog in the manger, will not allow others to take them. Mr. Applegarth says, as to picketing, Ques. 6736: "I say it is perfectly justifiable for men to appoint other men to wait at a shop door and say to those who come, 'The men were dissatisfied with the terms upon which they were working at that place, and if you go in you will under-ell us. Now, we beg that you will not do that;'" and he further adds the important information that if there were no picketings, strikes to a great extent would be useless. Although Mr. Applegarth thinks it right for the *men* to picket, yet in Question 7337 he gives the Commissioners several instances of picketing on the part of the *masters*, which he complains of as being very unjust. Cannot Mr. Applegarth see that if it be wrong in the one case it must be equally wrong in the other, and more especially when, as in the case of the men, the advice is accompanied by certain significant winks and gestures?

much truer charity to have spent that money in the better payment of their badly-paid workpeople. And one can readily believe that many honest workmen, groaning under such oppression and disgusted with such behaviour, have betaken themselves to the union, forgetting, in their haste and indignation, that they were raising up a greater evil than that they sought to destroy. We do not, therefore, defend conduct of this kind; on the contrary, we think it is for the advantage of the workman to do his work well, and for the master to pay him liberally. Selfishness on the part of an employer is, however, no valid argument against freedom in labour and trade, any more than his hypocrisy is against genuine charity and true religion. We must not confound the one with the other, but endeavour carefully to discriminate between both, and see that all laws and rules laid down between employers and employed, should be founded on truth and justice; and more especially should we do so, as there are hundreds and thousands of employers in this country, animated by the best and kindest motives towards their workmen.

With regard to the second evil, namely, the dictation and tyranny of the men to the masters, it is greatly to be deplored; but from the evidence given there can be no doubt that it prevails to a large extent. The unions dictate what work is to be done, and what men are to do it. Now this is reversing the proper order of things; for the men stand in relation to the masters as the hand of the body does to the head, and it is for the head to direct and the hand to obey. Besides, if the master pays for the work, it should be his business, and his business only, to say who shall and who shall not do it; and if he is content with the manner in which it is done, whether by apprentices or by non-union men—by labourer, bricklayer, or mason—whether by hand or by machinery—why, in the name of common sense, should the men find fault? It is the men's duty to do their work, and leave the master to do his; and if he does not do it properly, he, not they, will be the loser, and he will soon find out his mistake if he has not done it rightly. The men might with equal justice, after the master had paid for his dinner, go and tell him that a certain cook must cook it for him; or, after he has paid for his cloth, that a certain tailor must make his coat.

The third evil referred to is the great injury the men do to themselves by these rules. They say that a man shall only learn one branch of the trade: that if he is a labourer, he must not do a bit of bricklaying or mason work; and that if he is a plasterer, he must not turn his hand to painting or carpentering. Now, what is this but to stunt the growth of the man's faculties, and to deprive him of the means of earning his livelihood? It is to exchange the Divine law of liberty for the Hindoo law of caste. For if trade is bad in one thing, he can, if he knows more than one branch, turn his hand to another, and thus, as one door shuts another door opens for him. But to this trades-unions say, "No; he must be a bricklayer, a mason, a painter, or a carpenter," and such he must continue. Again, how often do we meet with in life instances of young men being apprenticed to trades quite unsuitable for them; or, as the late President Lincoln aptly called it, where the square peg is put into the round hole, and the round peg is put into the square hole; where, for instance, a man whose taste is for carpentering is put to making boots and shoes; another, who would make a very good shoemaker, finds, by mistake, he is on the tailor's bench. Even these mistakes are not confined to the lower classes; they are to be found in the higher. Let us suppose a case, and such a case is not beyond the bounds of probability, of a young man, pious, amiable, and of a noble house, the son of one high in the Church and State; he tries the law, but finds he has not sufficient application to

master its studies, or ability enough to hold a brief. The profession is not to his taste, so he leaves it and enters the army. Here, in time of peace, when the soldier's duty consists in acting the gentleman, he gets on very well; but "wars and rumours of wars arise," and he is ordered abroad. Alas! it is found he cannot go. No one for a moment doubts his courage, for he is as brave as a lion; but then his physical constitution is unable to endure the fatigues and hardships of campaigning; so he doffs the red coat and dons the black—he quits the army and enters the Church. Here he continues, learning to labour and to wait, until a merciful Providence, through parental solicitude, kindly interferes and helps him into a bishopric; so that he who had made a bad lawyer, a feeble soldier, and only a moderate preacher, at last makes a most amiable and excellent bishop. How great, then, would have been the loss to his country had the early prospects of this promising young man been blasted by the arbitrary rules of an aristocratic trades-union! Like the bishop, then, the middling labourer may be a very handy and intelligent man, and make, perhaps, a better bricklayer than the bricklayer he is under, or the bricklayer may be better suited to the work of the mason than the mason himself—and the same holds good with reference to plasterers, painters, carpenters, joiners, and so on; but the working of these arbitrary rules of trades-unions prevents a man from rising, by forcing him to that for which he is naturally unsuited. This, then, is a great mistake, and a serious injury done to the men themselves. And here we wish especially to point out the beauty and excellence of the divine laws in relation to this part of the subject. The law of heaven is that each one follow the bent and inclination of his own peculiar talent and genius, because in heaven restraints and restrictions are unknown; there the most perfect freedom reigns, and by this the individuality of the angelic mind and character is most fully and beautifully developed. Let us, then, try to make earth like unto heaven, by sweeping away all monopolies and unnecessary restrictions, by giving to every one—high and low, rich and poor, in every profession—equal opportunity for the development and reward of his talents. As the divine parable expresses it, let him that hath the ten talents be made the ruler over the ten cities, and him that hath the five talents the ruler over the five cities.

Let us now briefly consider the subject of the limitation of apprentices. We need not quote instances to prove that rules against apprentices exist. They are acknowledged by many if not by all the societies; and the reason given by Mr. Potter is, that where there is no limitation of apprentices, inferior articles are manufactured, work of every kind deteriorates, it drives skilled workmen out of England to foreign countries, where their superior work supplants our inferior labour to the injury of our export trade; and slop-work, the sweating system, and many other so-called evils are the result. As regards the slop-work trades, we would only say in extenuation of them, that they, especially those of the eastern districts of London, have, like that of the costermongers, been called into existence to supply the want of a certain class of the community; and if any one is to blame for the deterioration of the work and wages, we think it is the public who have deteriorated the prices; and this sin, so terrible in the eyes of Mr. Potter, may readily be forgiven, considering the poverty of those who have committed it. But, supposing you apply Mr. Potter's remedy by lessening the number of apprentices, you would only aggravate the evil by making the goods dearer, and therefore less accessible to the poorer classes; and when the price rises, the demand decreases, and the employment with it. But in these trades, and in all other trades, we think the master

should be at liberty to employ as many apprentices as he thinks proper. If he is quite willing to purchase the inferior labour, why should another step in and say he must not? On the same principle you might refuse to allow a man to purchase an inferior house or inferior clothes. Many are able but not willing, and many are willing but not able to purchase superior houses and clothes; and whether they are able or not, they ought to be the only parties to decide whether or not they shall buy. And if you allow inferior houses and clothes to be sold, on the same principle you ought not to step in and say to the seller, "You must not employ inferior labour to make them." The very reason of these things being cheap is because the labour that produces them is cheap; and if you take advantage of the cheapness of the article, by all means allow the maker to have the advantage of the cheap labour. The employment of apprentices, like all the other laws on this subject, should be quite open and free; and, when they are so, the matter will regulate itself. There is no fear that the master will employ too many apprentices; for no master can with advantage to himself or to the public he serves, employ too many lads. If he does so he runs the risk of being cut out of the trade by the inferior quality of his work. It is for his own interest, then, to employ a limited number; and, as we give the public the liberty of deciding what quantity of apprentice-made work they will buy, so we ought to give the employer the liberty of deciding his own quantity of apprentice labour. If you curtail the liberty in the one case, be consistent, and curtail it in the other.

This reason of the deterioration of the work is only the *apparent* reason of trades-union opposition to apprentices; it is not the *real* one. The true reason is given in answer to question 1102.—And why do you interfere with the master who determines to use the labour of his apprentice in preference to that of his journeyman?—Because it generally leads to annihilation of a regular journeyman's usual labour.

Q. 1103. That is to say, it diminishes the wages of the journeyman?—It does.

Q. 1104. Why should you interfere with me, when building a house, so as to prevent my building it at a cheap rate?—The question certainly is rather a powerful one. I can only say that the custom is adopted throughout the trade.

The secret of trades-union opposition to the employment of apprentices is to be found in these words, "it diminishes the wages of the journeyman": that is where the shoe pinches. Had it not done this we should never have heard a syllable about the deterioration of the work, or of slopwork, or the sweating system, &c., &c. The men wish to keep out apprentices in order to keep up their own wages. This again is another instance of the spirit of selfishness running through all these trade rules. The master should be allowed to buy apprentice-labour, and apprentices should be allowed to sell it. And why? Because the apprentices have to live as well as the men. "Self-preservation is the first law of nature;" and although an overabundance of labour may at times cause a scarcity of work, it is rather too much to tell the apprentices to keep out of employment and starve, so that the men may keep in employment and live.

By limiting the number of apprentices you produce another evil; and this was pointed out to Mr. Potter and his friends when they waited on Mr. Gladstone. He said, "All attempts to limit the labour of boys are attempts to limit the aggregate of the wages fund of the country." The cry at present is, The working classes have too little to live upon. The trades-unions, by their short-sighted conduct, are making that little less. Now, what would you think of the man who continually complained of illness from want of food, if

you saw him try to cure his complaint by still more lessening his daily nourishment? The working-man of England is such a man, afflicted with such a complaint, and, having called in the doctor in the shape of the trades-union, he is having this extraordinary prescription administered to him in the vain hope of making him strong. What would you think of such a man? Would you not say the patient is a fool, and his doctor a quack?

We will now briefly consider another rule of the union—that of “chasing.” Chasing means a workman working too fast, doing his work too quickly; in short, being active and expert in the execution of his duties. Now, the unions have a strong objection to this; and the reason given against chasing is, that an active workman may put himself to inconvenience, and also to distress (Quests. 1145-6), and he may also distress his fellow-workmen by working too hard. How remarkably solicitous these rules are framed for the welfare of their members! One would hardly have thought the union would have taken any notice of a trivial matter of this kind. But it does; for the men being so remarkably willing to work, and their constitutions so remarkably delicate, it is necessary to prevent them from over-exerting themselves. We would beg to suggest to the unions that they should have a rule laying down what quantity their members should eat and drink. The unions have great doubts as to one workman being able to do more than another; but in the matter of eating and drinking we think they must admit the men have different capacities; so that a rule is more required to regulate their appetites than to regulate their work. For our own part, we do not think a rule is required in either case. The man, in both cases, is the best judge how much he is fit for; and it is a piece of presumption for the unions to meddle in such matters at all. The above is the *apparent* reason for the rule against chasing; but we will now give you the *real* one, and we quote it from the fifth rule of the Bradford Labourers' rules, which is in these words:—“You are strictly cautioned not to overstep good rules by doing double the work you are required (by the society), and causing others to do the same in order to gain a smile from the master. Such foolhardy and deceitful actions leave a great portion of good members out of employment the year round. Certain individuals have been guilty, who will be expelled if they do not refrain.” (Ques. 3120.) And the Leeds bricklayers have a rule inflicting a fine of 1s. on any member carrying more than eight bricks (3122). Here, again, you are let into the secret of the matter. The union does not care a straw about its member's delicate constitution, or his hurting himself by over-exertion, but when he does his work quickly he lessens the labour, and therefore the amount of the wages, and it is here that the shoe pinches. Here, again, you have the spirit of selfishness showing itself; the work is to be spun out as much as possible, so that the master may be made to pay to the very uttermost farthing.* His interest is not consulted,

* The following instances will show how the work is spun out:—By the rules of the Bricklayers' and Brickmakers' Unions of Manchester, it is enacted “That any man found running or working beyond a regular speed, or trying to run off or take advantage of their fellow-workmen is to be fined the sum of 2s. 6d. for the first offence; for the second offence, 5s.; and for the third offence, 10s., and if persisted in, to be dealt with as the committee thinks proper. Any man working short-handed, without man for man, will be fined or punished as the committee think proper.” It is also enacted by this union, that the walking rate of the men be three miles an hour, doing more entails a fine. Here is a case that caused a strike. The master at Birmingham was doing some heavy work at the waterworks on the canal side, he put some planks across from the boat, and set some labourers to wheel the bricks from the boat right down to the place where they were to be used; but the labourers struck against it, and said that they must all be unloaded in the ordinary way, and stacked on the canal side, and then carried by hod down to the works. (Question 3160.)

and the true interest of the men is overlooked; both must give way to the will of this Prince of Selfishness. Now, what is this rule but an artificial barrier, raised to prevent the workman actively and faithfully doing his work? And what is the tendency of all such rules but to make the man an eye-servant by raising in his mind the idea that his interests are opposed to his master's interests, and the less he attends to his master's interests the more he attends to his own: Nothing can be more inimical to both parties than teaching of this kind. An honest and intelligent workman will endeavour to work cheerfully at his duties, and attend to them as thoroughly as if he were himself the master; and a good employer will show his appreciation of such services by advancing and rewarding his servant. The interest and success, then, of both parties are bound up together; and anyone who steps in to separate the two is an enemy to both. No doubt there are selfish men among the employers, who would not recognise faithful service from their man beyond the mere payment of his weekly wages; but even in such a case the man's duty remains the same, and, whether it is recognised or not, he is none the less bound faithfully to discharge it. Again, sometimes the workman may have a doubt as to how far his duty goes; such, for instance, in what consists a fair day's work for a fair day's wage; and perhaps he cannot rely on his master's giving a just decision in the question. What, then, is he to do under the circumstances? Is he to surrender his own manly independence and freedom, and his own right of private judgment by appealing to the tribunal of a secret and irresponsible body? By no means. Every honest and intelligent workman is to ask *himself* what is right and necessary in such a case. He is to be guided by the light that is *in* him, and according to that he is faithfully to act. For a trades-union, then, to step in and thrust its opinion and will on the workman, is to usurp the place of that conscience which God in his mercy and wisdom has planted in his heart.

We now come to consider one of the greatest evils, we might term it the greatest curse, arising from the action of these unions, and that is the antagonism it has raised between the employer and his workmen. It is indeed painful to read the evidence on this part of the subject. Formerly the man went direct to the master and arranged the matter: if they did not come to terms, there was nothing more than a simple refusal between the two. If they agreed and the man went to work, the master naturally began to take an interest in his workman; and the longer he continued in his service the more that interest increased, the master treating the man with greater kindness, and the workman returning that kindness by respect to his employer and attention to his interests. Now all this has been very greatly changed. The union has stepped in between them; and, as the workman cannot serve two masters, he has, in an evil hour, cast off allegiance to his employer, preferring the allegiance of the union. Hear what the employer says:

Q. 2904. As far as I and my partners are concerned, and I believe the generality of the masters, we are very desirous to consult the comfort and the advantage of our workmen. But that feeling, unfortunately, has changed of late years. In my younger days, there used to be some sort of attachment between master and men, but that has entirely gone, and I say that it is the unions, and nothing else, that have brought that result. In the strike of 1859, men came to us who had worked at the place for thirty or forty years, and said to us, "This is the saddest day that ever happened to us in our lives, but we must go; we are bound to go."

Q. 2905. You believe that the effect of these unions is to loosen the tie between the workman and the employer?—That experience has most

decidedly been ours. When we find that we cannot come to these men and talk to them as friends; that, in fact, their individuality is lost because they are members of a union, it seems to me a most distressing thing. I have talked to them and argued with them; but in two or three days' time it is all obliterated by the influence of the union.

Q. 2906. In the absence of any operation of the unions when masters are left to themselves, the tendency is for each master to keep his men as long as he can, is it not?—Most decidedly.

Q. 2907. On the other hand, when the union tries to screw every penny out of the master that it can, it destroys the very essence of the relation which should subsist between them?—Yes.

Q. 2908. It is, then, natural for the master to say to the men, "Having got out of me everything you can, you have no right to ask me on social considerations for anything more?"—Yes. I have heard many masters say, "I used during the winter to keep on as many men as I could, even at my own personal loss: but now these men care nothing for me." In fact, the effect of the unions is to induce them not to do anything for my benefit, and, therefore, why should I put my hand into my pocket for them?

Q. 2909. That feeling is general throughout the trade?—I am afraid it is.

Q. 2910. And it is increasing, you fear?—Yes, every one notices that there is a difference in the very behaviour of the men: some hardly address you with ordinary civility.

Q. 2911. So that the effect of these unions is to increase the antagonism between the interest of the master and the interest of the workmen?—I think so.

This is the evidence of Mr. Trollope, and, if necessary, it can be corroborated by other witnesses; but this is unnecessary: it tells its own tale, and is so simple and so painful, that no one can for a moment doubt its truth. The employer and his workmen were intended to be somewhat in the same relation as husband and wife; and when they had any little differences, as no doubt they would—for "mistakes will occur in the best regulated families"—they ought to have arranged them between themselves; but the wife in this case, in order to correct her husband, has abandoned her legitimate protector and taken up with a stranger and intruder, and since then there has been nothing else but rows in the house. Whatever, then, may be the employers' faults, they do not justify the course taken by the men; and the first step towards restoring peace and harmony to the house is to turn the intruder out.

Having said thus much on the rules of the unions, we now proceed to the subject of Strikes; and as a fitting introduction to it we will give you an idea of how the money of the workman is not merely spent, but squandered. In question 1998-9 we are informed by the secretary, Houlsey, that "a Delegate meeting, to revise the laws of the Operative Bricklayers' Society, cost £1088. Each delegate was paid 11s. 6d. per day, and their lodgings and railway fares, and 6d. each for refreshment, and that meeting occupied a fortnight." Thus, reckoning seven days to the week, each delegate received £4 per week, besides the expense of his lodgings, railway fares, and refreshments. If the revising of the rules cost £1088, what did the framing of them cost? However badly the men may be paid, the delegates, in this instance, have taken very good care not to allow their services to go unrewarded.

In question 6522 we find that Mr. Applegarth's printing and stationery account, for the year 1866, amounted to £1052 17s. 8d., and that the delegates were paid £567 16s. 2d. In explaining this item of stationery, he says:—"Q. 7276. It will be remembered that the item of printing and stationery was pointed out as not economical. Now, I may state, in that very item which was selected, there were 20,000

copies of rules, which will produce a *profit of at least one hundred per cent.*, when sold." This is a most extraordinary defence, and comes with a very damaging effect from a unionist like Mr. Applegarth. His complaint is that the masters' profits are too large, and the men's wages too low; but when *he* becomes a sort of master printer and stationer, he sells his goods at the very high profit of at least one hundred per cent., and this, too, to his dear friend and brother, the poor, badly-paid working man. We very much fear Mr. Applegarth's love for the working man is, after all, like a certain lady's "everlasting beauty"—only skin deep, and rises in price in proportion as it decreases in usefulness. We would ask you, then, Working Men, now that you have got the Union, with all its expensive machinery, don't you think, like Dr. Franklin, you pay too dear for your whistle? And do you not also think that you could employ your hard-earned wages to far greater advantage amongst your wives and families, instead of wasting them in the purchase of Mr. Applegarth's high-priced stationery, or in providing food and refreshments for Mr. Houlsey's hungry delegates?

In question 964-971 evidence is given of a strike taking place because the men had an objection to work with the foreman, although he had only been a few hours in the shop. In question 961 we have the opinion of one of the men as to the worth of strikes. Mr. William Allan:—

Your experience then is that strikes have not benefited the men? They have in some instances.

Q. 962. As a rule not?—As a rule, they have been much the same at the finish of the strike as they were before it commenced.

Q. 963. With all the misery of the strike meanwhile?—Yes.

Again, in questions 3595 to 3600, We have evidence on what trivial grounds they will sometimes take place, brought about, too, by the most worthless class of the operatives. In this case, the men's time was divided into thirds, and the union determined to have it divided into fourths. The result to a steady, industrious man would not have made 2s. 6d. or 5s. either the better or the worse; yet on this trifling matter a strike took place, lasting four months, and in the end the men had to yield. This strike took place in the winter, and in the following spring trade had so greatly improved, that the men gained the advance they had before struck for, thus showing the absurdity of strikes; for it is trade, and not strikes, that regulates wages.

In question 4326 and following, we have the history of the great strike in Manchester at the New Gaol and Assize Courts. The men determined to remove an obnoxious foreman; the offence of this man being his placing an efficient gang-leader in the place of an inefficient one, which was simply doing his duty, and because of this the men struck work. They continued on strike for many months, spent £2600, besides losing all their wages, and after all they were most ignominiously beaten. One of the men (O'Neil) was examined on the subject of this strike. He was Secretary of the Manchester Lodge; and, though occupying that important office, he had a memory like a sieve—it could hold nothing; and out of him the truth was as difficult to get as it was to draw mercy from Shylock. After severe examination he admitted the fact that £920 was given towards this strike by the executive of the Union *without even consulting the members*, and also that the London Society sent their Secretary (Coulson) down to Manchester, who bribed the men to leave their employment. This strike was characterised by compulsion, picketing, intimidation, violence, bribery and corruption in their worst features, and stands out in the history of trades-unions as one of the most gigantic attempts at tyranny they ever made, as well as one of their most complete failures.

From Question 615 we learn that it cost the Amalgamated Society

of Engineers £40,000 the first six months of the lock-out of 1852, besides the loss of the men's wages, and thousands of pounds were lost both to men and masters in the great building strike of 1859. Besides these, we have on record the strike in the building trade in the Eastern Counties in 1864; also the lock-out in the iron trade, arising out of the North Staffordshire strike. According to the *Times* of March 22nd, 1865, out of a population of 133,000 in the counties of Staffordshire and East Worcestershire, 33,730 workers were thrown out of employment; and out of a population of 59,128 in the North of England, 14,782; thus in this strike alone nearly 50,000 of the working classes were deprived of their livelihood. The coal strike and lock-out of 1858 is still remembered in West Yorkshire, and the Preston strike of 1853 in Lancashire; and, lastly, the colliers of Lancashire have again been out for three months this year; and after much violence and rioting, to quell which the police and military have been called in, as well as to protect non-union men, the union men have been compelled to yield and agree to the masters' terms. To carry on this strike it is reckoned, according to the *Morning Post*, 8th May, 1868, that £15,000 to £20,000 have been drawn out of the funds of the unions, or by levies on and contributions from the working classes, which sum has been uselessly spent; and, reckoning £1 a week as wages for each man out for the three months, this strike has caused the loss of wages to the amount of £240,000, besides the loss to the employers and those indirectly connected with the trade. But this is not all. Some of the men engaged in the rioting have been convicted and sentenced to five years penal servitude, and many of those remaining have sullenly returned to work, exasperated and embittered against their employers. These then are some of the deplorable and disastrous results of this strike, and it is the unions, working on the ignorance of the men, that are to be held responsible for them.

But, further, we learn from "Chambers' Information for the People," "Popular Statistics," p. 553, how wages have been gradually rising by the natural growth of trade and intelligence.

Before the early part of the reign of George III. the wages of English workmen, as given by Young in 1763, were:—

| | Per week |
|--|----------------------|
| Iron works at Rotherham | 10s. 0d. |
| Cutlery at Sheffield | 12s. 6d. |
| Clothworkers at Wakefield | 10s. 0d. |
| Colliers | 11s. 0d. |
| Colliers at Newcastle | 15s. 6d. |
| Cotton workers at Carlisle | 9s. 0d. |
| Shoemakers and pinmakers at Warrington | 8s. 7d. |
| Fustian-workers, &c., at Manchester | 7s. 1d. |
| In the Potteries (men) | 9s. 6d. |
| Agricultural labourers | from 5s. 10d. to 8s. |

By the gradual increase of trade up to 1820, Mr. Jellinger Symons gives the wages of the same classes as follow:—

| | Per week. |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Sheffield workmen from | 25s. 0d. to 40s. 0d. |
| Manchester workmen from | 13s. 0d. to 30s. 0d. |
| Colliers | 21s. |
| Agricultural labourers | 8s. 6d. to 10s. 6d. |
| Flax-workers at Leeds | 17s. 0d. to 19s. 0d. |

Thus, by the gradual operation of trade and intelligence wages were doubled, and in many cases trebled, in seventy years. The wages at the present time are still higher all over England. Bread is about the same price, or rather cheaper. Potatoes, much cheaper. Tea, coffee, and sugar are much reduced in price; and clothes are immensely cheaper and better.

All this by peaceable change; and if the intelligence of the people had been as further increased by education and thoughtfulness on their own parts, these results would have been more favourable still.

The contrary results of strikes may be strikingly exhibited by the following statements extracted from a paper read by Dr. Watts before the Statistical

Society at Manchester, September, 1861. Dr. Watts is one of the most zealous and enlightened friends of the working classes :—

The great Preston strike lasted 38 weeks ; the one at Padiham, 29 weeks ; Bolton, 6 weeks ; Ashton and district, 6 weeks ; Clithero, 6 weeks ; Blackburn, 3 weeks ; the strike of the London builders, 26 weeks ; and the late Colne, 50 weeks.

The amount in dispute in a strike is seldom more than 5 per cent., often not so much.

Let us assume that the dispute is for 5 per cent. and that it succeeds. We shall even then see that he who wins loses. The following table shows the length of time it would take to make up for the loss of time in a strike :—

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|--------|
| The loss of | 1 month | requires | $1\frac{3}{4}$ | years. |
| " | 2 months | " | $3\frac{1}{4}$ | " |
| " | 3 " | " | $4\frac{1}{2}$ | " |
| " | 4 " | " | 9 | " |
| " | 12 " | " | 19 | " |
| " | $12\frac{1}{2}$ " | " | 20 | " |

But if the strike does not succeed, the bitterness and loss are sustained with no compensation ; and here is a list of unsuccessful strikes and their results, which occurred within $2\frac{1}{2}$ years, with the exception only of Preston, which we include on account of its striking character :—

| | Number of Persons. | Weeks of Strike. | Amount of Loss. | $1\frac{1}{2}$ per Cent. Loss on Capital. | Subscriptions to Support. | Total Loss. |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|---|---------------------------|-------------|
| Preston..... | 15,000 | 38 | £127,500 | £92,625 | £106,875 | £627,000 |
| Padiham..... | 800 | 29 | 17,400 | 3,770 | 4,350 | 25,520 |
| Clitheroe..... | 3,000 | 6 | 13,500 | 2,925 | 3,375 | 19,800 |
| Blackburn.... | 40,000 | 3 | 90,000 | 19,500 | 22,500 | 132,000 |
| Ashton..... | 22,000 | 6 | 99,000 | 21,450 | 24,750 | 145,200 |
| Colne..... | 1,500 | 50 | 56,250 | 12,187 | 14,062 | 82,499 |
| Bolton..... | 12,000 | 6 | 54,000 | 11,700 | 13,500 | 79,200 |
| London } ... | 10,000 | 26 | 325,000 | 53,125 | 81,250 | 459,375 |
| Building } | | | 1,082,650 | 217,282 | 270,662 | 1,570,594 |

This is the money loss. Then the loss in morality by the men getting into loose, bad habits, and the loss in good will between men and masters are beyond all price.

David Chadwick, Esq., then Treasurer of the borough of Salford, says in a paper read before the Statistical Society, December, 1859, "On the rate of Wages in the Manufacturing Districts, 1839 to 1859 :"—

"The wages of all classes of factory operatives appear to have increased from 10 to 25 per cent. during the last 20 years. This is mainly owing to the improvements in the construction of the machinery, and the increased speed at which it is worked."

Mr. Henry Ashworth, of Bolton, has estimated that before 1842 the net earnings of the operative spinner amounted to 20s. per week ; in 1859 to 30s. 10d., with some slight help by a boy, although the price for working 20lb. of yarn is reduced from 4s. 7d. to 3s. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Contrast these statements, all founded on exact figures. By peaceable means there had been a gradual constant rise of 2s. or 3s. in the 20s. By violent means there was wasted in unsuccessful strikes in two years and a half a million of money by the working men.

Take another illustration.

The Staffordshire colliers turned out in 1864 against a reduction of 3d. a day arising from the state of trade. They remained out four months, and then went in at the masters' terms. This strike cost as follows :—

| | | | |
|--|----|----|---------|
| 6932 men at 22s. per week for ten weeks | .. | .. | £76,252 |
| 3068 youths at 9s. | .. | .. | 13,806 |
| Employers' loss £100 per man at 15 per cent. .. | .. | .. | 23,076 |
| Shopkeepers' loss on wages and profits at 15 per cent. | .. | .. | 16,104 |

£129,238

without reckoning subscriptions to the men, or loss to the public in extra price of coals.

This irrational and suicidal conduct on the part of the men has been committed under the influence of the trades-unions; and we can only find a fitting parallel to such infatuation in the annals of Eastern Paganism. It is like the conduct of the poor deluded fanatic, who, under the influence and at the instigation of his priests, insanely throws himself before the wheels of the car of Juggernaut. Beware, then, Working Men, when certain Professors of Political Economy, whose zeal in your cause surpasses their wisdom, tell you that you have the right to strike. You have the right to strike, just as you have the right, or rather the power, to commit self-destruction; but only *madmen* would exercise such a right.

And what does all this painful evidence prove? Does it not show on the very face of it that strikes will do more to impoverish the men than any lowering of wages the masters may attempt? The Recorder of the Wigan Borough Sessions, in addressing the jury on the subject of the above riots, says:—"I believe there never has been a strike, certainly not one of long continuance even when successful, which has not resulted in more poverty, privation, and suffering among the men and their wives and families, than if the turn-outs had continued to work at even far less wages than they had rejected." And with such facts before them, any one open to conviction must come to the same conclusion. In many instances strikes have occurred for the sake of 2s. or 3s. a week; and, to gain this paltry sum, the men have thrown away their weekly wages for months together; and, after all, they have not got what they struck for; and even in those cases where they have got it, don't you think they have reversed the good old proverb by giving the herring to catch the sprat? In return, then, for the immense expenditure of strikes, the men gain nothing. Looking at the subject merely as a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, the folly of the thing is self-evident; and there is not only the loss of the money to be considered, but there is something far worse in the misery and desolation caused to their poor wives and families and homes during its continuance. Trades-unions will answer to all this, that if we put the gain on the one side, and the loss on the other and strike the balance, the difference will be found to be in their favour. Now, admitting this for argument sake, although we have proved exactly the reverse to be the truth, we ask, has that balance been honestly come by? The mere success of a thing is no justification of the means employed for its accomplishment. A man, for instance, may have made a good round sum at smuggling or burglary; but his success is no defence of the profession by which he has amassed his ill-gotten gain; and it is far better for him to remain a poor but honest man, than to become a rich and successful rogue. We must, before considering the success of the thing, consider the legality of the means employed; and we think it has been clearly shown that a workman is not justified in resorting to combination, with or without violence, to raise the price of labour, any more than the merchant is to raise the price of tea or cotton. Then again, admitting that the means employed are fair and honourable, the next question is, have they received a fair return for all the money expended, and misery endured in the strife? When a merchant engages in a speculation, he always looks for a fair profit on the amount risked; and viewing strikes in this light, the results from them are by no means worth what is ventured for them. Again, supposing when trade is good, a strike takes place and a rise is obtained, trade afterwards may become bad, and that rise is again lost, so that the union cannot hold the gain they seek. The union, in this respect, is like Sisyphus. He, according to classical fable, was, by the gods, as a punishment for his crimes, condemned to continually roll an

immense stone up a steep hill, and just as he was on the point of reaching the summit, and hoped his labour was finished, the stone would elude his grasp, and roll down again. Like him, the union is condemned—we will not say for its crimes, but most certainly for its folly—to be continually rolling up the wages, and just as the modern Sisypus gains the summit the wages roll back again. The unions may do all they possibly can to keep up the price of labour; but when trade becomes slack they cannot maintain it; and the reason of this is evident, when we bear in mind the important fact that the unions cannot create trade, any more than the Bank of England can create commerce; and it is for them to follow the wise example of the Bank, and allow the wages, like the gold, to rise and fall according to the supply and demand. It is possible they may not by this method gain so quick and so high a rise as in some cases they gain by means of a strike; but the rise is more certain and permanent, because the cause is more natural, and the men are in pocket all the money they might foolishly spend on the strike, and save themselves and their families all its miseries, besides having the pleasure, which every honest workman must desire, of knowing and feeling that he has acted honourably. Another very important consideration to bear in mind is this—that strikes unsettle and disturb the financial arrangements of the employers. The great railway and building operations of the country are carried out by advances from bankers and financial agents. There is no body of commercial men who are so willing to employ capital at a moderate rate as bankers. They are far more content with a small profit and safe and sure investment than a large profit and hazardous trade. At the same time, no commercial men are so sensitive to risk and danger; and if they have the slightest suspicion that there is anything wrong, or that the work is liable to be stopped at any moment, then they do not care about advancing money to carry it out, so that when the capital is stopped, employment is stopped and wages also. Mr. Rupert Kettle, in his evidence (Question 7185), says: “But there is another person who is disturbed, and whose influence on the trade is paramount, and that is the banker, who finds the money for the builder. I am confident that when the trade is so disturbed that a banker cannot be quite certain whether a strike will not interpose to prevent the builder having the architect’s certificate, showing that he is able to meet the state of his banker’s account periodically, he would hesitate to advance money to carry on the business. In all things in fact, security increases confidence, and so promotes investment; and if you do anything to disturb security and bring about such a state of things as exists in the building trade, you disturb the confidence of people in it, and divert the investment of capital.” Here, then, is another very powerful reason proving that the interests of labour and capital are identical, and that both should work harmoniously together. The more capital there is invested in a trade, the more will the operations of that trade extend, the greater will be the demand for labour, and the higher the wages; but strikes, by driving capital from the trade, bring loss on the employers and poverty on the men. And, lastly, strikes ought to be condemned because they are in their very nature a species of social civil war. War, whether of a national or social kind, can very rarely be justified, more especially when waged between citizens, and workmen and employers. Whatever differences arise, they can be arranged by arbitration. The spirit of our age is to settle disputes, not by blows, but by argument; not by physical or social violence, but by dispassionate and enlightened reason. This is one of the most pleasing signs of our times; for it shows a free people, the makers and supporters of free laws; and it is the duty of every one to strengthen this growing sentiment by discountenancing all attempts of individuals resorting to physical or social violence to redress

public or private grievances. We have a free press, public teachers, and a Parliament that is becoming more and more the reflex of public and national opinion, before whom we can place our disputes, and by whom we can have them fairly discussed. Let us then appeal to them, and calmly wait a righteous judgment.

We have thus far endeavoured to show that the objects the unions seek are many of them not lawful, and, where lawful, the means employed are not legal or right. We have seen that picketing, intimidation, violence, and strikes, are contrary to law and order; that the minimum rate of wages, limitation of apprentices, and the rules relating to labourers, bricklayers, masons, painters, &c., also as to chasing, are all artificial restraints, tending to stunt the growth of the men's faculties, to retard their advancement, and lessen their employment and wages, as well as to injure trade, and defraud the employers and the public; and, lastly, they are at variance, both in the letter and the spirit, with the Divine law of "doing unto others as ye would they should do unto you"—that law which ought to be the guide alike of individuals and nations in all their dealings. Let not, then, trades-unions for one moment suppose that their ideas are for society's good. What mankind requires is more freedom in labour, commerce, and religion. The world is moving onwards, not backwards; and they might just as well expect the strong man, proud in his strength, to return again to the swaddling clothes of his babyhood, as to expect this country to adopt the artificial restraints and restrictions of the shortsighted, narrow-souled system of trades-unionism. The question, then, arises, what good are these unions? or are they a good at all? They were originally benefit societies; but, by having trade rules grafted on them, they have been taken out of their proper place, and applied to purposes for which they were never intended, and thus have become an evil. There is no such thing in existence as pure evil. All evils are simply good things abused or perverted. Fire and water, for instance, are very good things in their proper place, but very dangerous things out of their place; and trades-unions, as at present conducted, are a striking illustration of this truth. They originated as benefit and friendly societies in the strict sense of the term, and were designed to be the savings' bank of the workman, to which he could apply for help when out of work, or in times of sickness, or from accident, and, when he died, where his family could receive assistance. From these most useful and commendable objects they have been turned, and applied to purposes altogether beyond their proper sphere, and foreign to their true nature. Mr. Allan, of the Amalgamated Engineers, thus speaks on this point:—

Q. 7573. Trades-unions are not now the same as they were formerly. A simple trades-union for the protection of trade, in my opinion, is calculated to bring about a great deal of unpleasantness and ill-feeling between employers and workmen; but when we have a system of benefits attached to it, it brings a better feeling to bear on many of the members, and, in many instances, no doubt they adopt a wiser course than they would adopt if they were simply a trade society.

Mr. Allan by this fairly admits the evil of the trades-union; and what does he do to cure it? Does he do as every sensible and clear-headed man would, eradicate the evil and leave the good? No, he does not; but he mixes the good and the bad together, thus defiling and polluting the good of the friendly society with the evil of the trade rules. The evil of the unions is admitted, and the cure is very simple, namely, by confining them to their proper place, and so preventing their interfering with trade. So long as they are kept there we admire and commend them, and heartily wish them and their members every success, and that same feeling which prompts us to support them as a good prompts us to expose them when an evil. As benefit societies they can be the

means of great use, and are therefore justly entitled to legal protection for their funds against dishonest officers. The sympathies of all true Christian men are with the working classes. Their labour, however humble, is honourable, and their poverty is no disgrace ; for

“The honest man, tho’ e’er so poor,
Is king o’ men for a’ that.”

We wish to see their condition improved in every respect—better paid, better clothed, better fed, and better educated, and the worthy amongst them rise to positions in life corresponding to their merits and abilities. All this and a great deal more we sincerely desire ; but we wish to see it brought about by lawful, not unlawful, means. In conclusion, we would beg to offer a suggestion, or rather to support a suggestion that has already been made to the Legislature. In reading the evidence laid before the Commission, one is appalled by the terrible revelations made, especially in relation to the state of immorality of the lower orders in Sheffield and the Manchester districts. They reveal a state of society which neither the higher, the middle, nor the respectable part of the working classes ever believed to exist. However painful it is to make this discovery, it is far better that these terrible evils should be laid open, than allowed to lie hid like a social ulcer, poisoning and corrupting the life’s blood of society. These men are controlled by no conscience, guided by no principle of religion, honour, or duty, and are scarcely moved even by the stern, iron rod of the law. And what is the cause of such a state of things ? They are for the greater part the sins of ignorance, and can in the course of time be removed by education. Let, then, a system of National Education—compulsory, if necessary—be provided, so that every child may have the means of instruction placed within its reach, an education that will teach him not only to read and write, but, what is far more necessary for the duties and difficulties of life, to think, understand, and act for himself as an intelligent, conscientious, manly, and independent being. This duty has been too long delayed by our Government, and we are being punished for its neglect by having the children reared in the midst of all this vice and darkness, becoming “rotten before they are ripe.” Spread, then, the blessings of Education far and wide amongst our labouring population ; and before its heavenly light those black, thick clouds of ignorance, settled on the minds of our people, and big with so many curses, will gradually roll away, and a brighter and happier day dawn on our land.





